

## Healthcare science ambassador's toolkit – supporting notes

### Introduction

Health Careers has produced this toolkit to support healthcare science ambassadors in promoting the wide range of exciting and interesting healthcare science careers in schools, colleges and in their own organisations.

It was developed following research with healthcare science ambassadors. It showed that ambassadors are very enthusiastic about what they do, particularly giving presentations in schools and colleges, but would like more support and resources.

We hope you find it useful.

### What's in the toolkit?

The toolkit is made up of a number of specific materials to give you confidence and knowledge when speaking in schools and colleges:

- template powerpoint presentations (slides can be added and deleted to suit the needs of your presentation)
- video with current healthcare science degree students
- PDFs of real-life stories of existing healthcare scientists
- posters for you to use in presentation in schools
- leaflets for you to give out.

These supporting notes are designed to give you additional information for presentations and conversations with young people about careers in healthcare science. There is also some basic information on the healthcare science specialisms and where to find out more information.

## Areas of healthcare science

Healthcare science is broken down into four main divisions:

- **Life Sciences** (primarily laboratory based, but with increasingly direct patient contact at the point of care, investigating disease, genetic make up, researching new scientific treatments etc)
- **Physiological sciences** (predominantly working directly with patients, measuring the function of a particular organ or body system)
- **Physical sciences and biomedical engineering** (some roles involve direct patient contact (for example rehabilitation engineering), others are ensuring the safe functioning of equipment or researching new devices)
- **Clinical bioinformatics** (developing and improving ways of acquiring, storing, organising and analysing biological data that supports the delivery of patient care).

Each of the four divisions has different career options:

<b>Life sciences</b>	Infection sciences Blood sciences Cellular science
<b>Physiological sciences</b>	Cardiovascular, respiratory and sleep sciences Neurosensory sciences
<b>Physical sciences and biomedical engineering</b>	Medical physics Clinical engineering
<b>Clinical bioinformatics</b>	Clinical bioinformatics (genomics) Clinical bioinformatics (health informatics) Clinical bioinformatics (physical sciences)

More information on each of these areas can be found at [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles).

## Healthcare science careers

Over the last few years, there have been many changes to way that staff working in healthcare science are trained and developed.

These changes:

- ensure that the NHS can adopt scientific and technological advances to improve patient care
- support the healthcare science workforce to take on broader roles, including clinical care, leadership, management and education, ensuring staff are engaged in decisions affecting them and the services they provide
- simplify career structures, aligning them with the career pathways of other healthcare professionals
- formalise education and training to deliver coherent and consistent pathways for all new and existing healthcare science staff, including academic and workforce-based training at all levels.

## Education and training opportunities in each area of healthcare science

We have developed some key points that you might want to consider in your presentations and discussions with schools and colleges.

### *Apprenticeships*

- Healthcare science apprenticeships are being rolled out across the country over the next few years.
- Apprenticeships are a great way of becoming a healthcare science assistant.
- Opportunities are being advertised at [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk) and [www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)
- More information is available at [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/HSC-assistant-associate](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/HSC-assistant-associate)

### *Undergraduate entry (NHS Practitioner Programme)*

- The undergraduate entry route and the post-graduate entry route are now well established across the country.
- Around 20 universities across the country are running BSc (Hons) degrees in healthcare science across the life sciences, physiological sciences and physical sciences and biomedical engineering
- Students spend 50 weeks of their degree gaining work-based training in the NHS.
- Upon completing the degree, they'll be eligible to apply for healthcare science practitioner roles.
- Job prospects will be excellent and vacancies with a starting salary of at least £21k will be waiting for you across the country.
- More information is available at [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/ptp](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/ptp).

*Undergraduate entry (NHS Practitioner Programme)*

- Students who take a traditional science or engineering degree at university can still join the healthcare science team.
- The NHS Scientist Training Programme offers successful applicants the opportunity to study towards a master's degree while earning a salary in excess of £25k a year.
- More information is available at [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/stp](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/stp).

**Top tips**

Healthcare science roles become more specialised as the level of training increases.

Example

*In life sciences at undergraduate level, students will study infection sciences, blood sciences or cellular sciences. However, at postgraduate level, the opportunities in blood sciences alone are clinical biochemistry, haematology and transfusion science, clinical immunology and genetics.*

Availability of education and training opportunities varies across the training routes so it is important to consider this when thinking about the specialism you want to work in.

Example

*There are only one or two universities currently running the undergraduate degrees in medical physics while at least eight run degrees in infection sciences. However, vacancies in medical physics for the NHS Scientist Training programme dramatically increase while there are few in clinical immunology.*

## Presentation top tips

Giving a presentation can be nerve-wracking, so here are a few tips to bear in mind.

### **Prepare, prepare, prepare**

The materials we've provided for you to use have all the information you need to sell healthcare science as a fantastic career. Take the time to read them carefully and familiarise yourself with the content, particularly in the areas of healthcare science that you don't actually work in.

Practice makes perfect so make sure you have a run-through before you get there.

### **Audience**

If you were thinking about your career options again now, what would you want to know and how would you like that information presented to you? Putting yourself in your audience's shoes will really help you get your message across, so imagine you're back at school!

### **Make it practical**

If you can, take along something a piece of equipment the young people can touch or use so they can experience some science for themselves! Or could you demonstrate some equipment by performing a simple hearing or eye test?

### **Sell it**

Healthcare science is a fantastic career option for anyone interested in science and helping others, so make sure you get that message across. Use our video and case studies to demonstrate the breadth of careers available and don't be afraid to tell your own story. What made you interested in healthcare science and what do you love about your job?

### **Relax and enjoy**

If you're relaxed and confident, your audience is more likely to engage with you, so speak up confidently and make sure you look around the room and make eye contact as you speak.

### **Good luck!**

Most of all, thank you for helping to spread the healthcare science message. Good luck!

### Further information

It is important to point students and teachers to relevant sources of information wherever possible, so please show and tell them about the following:

- General information on healthcare science careers is available at [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles)
- Undergraduate courses and the universities offering them can be found at [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/courses](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/courses)
- Health Careers has a helpline for the latest information on all careers in the NHS and is where to order copies of the leaflet, poster and real life stories from. Call 0345 60 60 655 or email [advice@healthcareers.nhs.uk](mailto:advice@healthcareers.nhs.uk)
- Medical Mavericks is a team of medics, physiologists and scientists who visit schools to help pupils make more informed decisions about their careers and future ambitions. Have a look at some of their workshops: <http://www.medicalmavericks.co.uk>
- The North West Healthcare Science Network has lots of useful information, including videos which show the patient perspective of healthcare science. Visit: [www.nwhcs.nhs.uk](http://www.nwhcs.nhs.uk)